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**LFM: Anthony McAuliff at
Bastogne**

Lead: For 400 years service men and women have fought to carve out and defend freedom and the civilization we know as America. This series on *A Moment in Time* is devoted to the memory of those warriors, whose devotion gave, in the words of Lincoln at Gettysburg, *the last full measure*.

Intro: A Moment in Time with Dan Roberts.

Content: Located on a plateau 1600 feet above sea level, the small

Belgium market town of Bastogne had been the focus of military strategy for centuries. In the fall of 1944, Adolf Hitler snapped out of the lethargy induced by the attempt on his life the previous summer and determined to go back on the offensive, to seize again the initiative lost when the Allies invaded Normandy. On the morning of December 16, 1944, thousands of German troops and tanks surged back across the Allied lines in an attempt to throw them into the sea. This action became the Battle of the Bulge.

The heaviest of the attacks were directed against outnumbered American troops. The G.I.s were

brave and tenacious, but often found themselves cut off in the rush of the German advance. Units of the 101st Airborne Division led by General Anthony C. McAuliffe found themselves so isolated in Bastogne. Ammunition was running out and food was low.

Around noon on the 22nd, four Germans, one of them carrying a large white flag, appeared in the front of fox holes south of town. They had an ultimatum. McAuliffe had two hours to surrender Bastogne. His chief of staff was the first to read the message. "What does it say?" asked the general. "They want you to surrender." "Aw, nuts!" he said. In the end

McAuliffe wrote, "To the German commander, Nuts! From the American commander."

Much fighting would remain before the Bulge was erased and Germany defeated. But few would forget the defiant message of Anthony McAuliffe, surrounded, outnumbered, low on supplies, who when offered the chance to surrender, delivered the ultimate American message of defiance, "Nuts!"

At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.

Resources

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